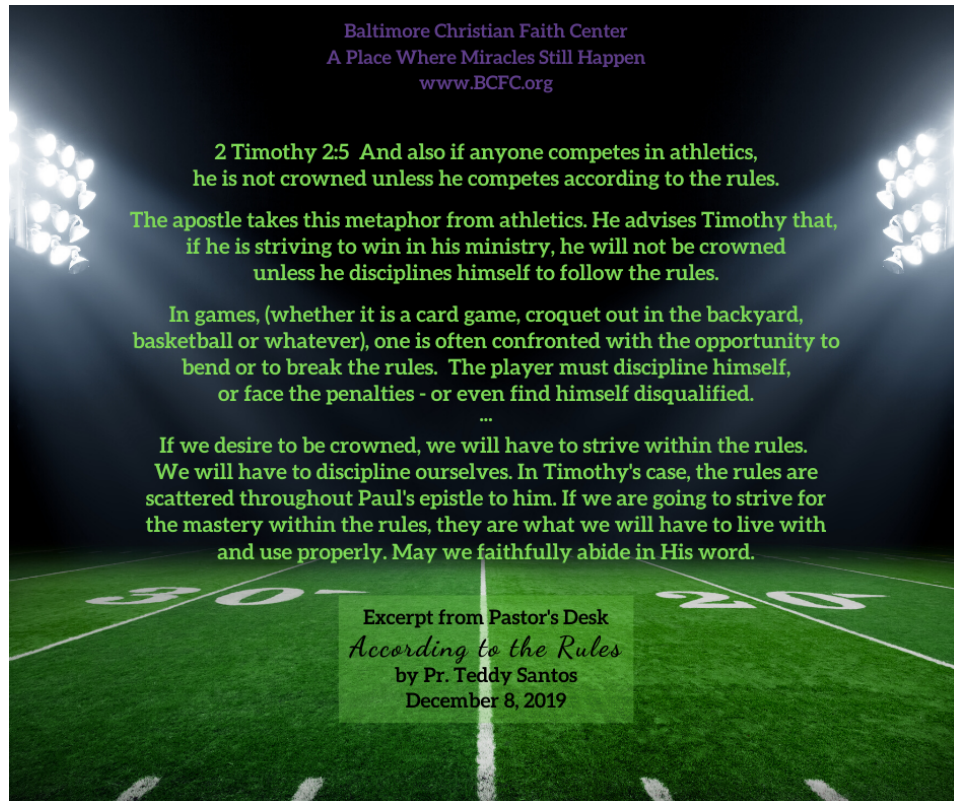


According To The Rules

Pastor's Desk – December 8, 2019



2 Timothy 2:5 *And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.*

The apostle takes this metaphor from athletics. He advises Timothy that, if he is striving to win in his ministry, he will not be crowned unless he disciplines himself to follow the rules.

In games (whether it is a card game, croquet out in the backyard, basketball, or whatever), one is often confronted with the opportunity to bend or to break the rules. The player must discipline himself, or face the penalties - or even find himself disqualified. If one violates the laws in football, he receives a 5-yard, 10-yard, or 15-yard penalty. In some games, the rule-breaker just gets thrown right out! The athlete, then, must discipline himself.

Yet, Paul is using this regarding members of God's church. How many fall out before they reach the finish line, disqualified because they did not maintain unquestioning obedience to the word of God!

What are some of the rules in connection with Christian service? (1) The Christian must practice self-discipline (**1Co 9:27**). (2) He must not fight with carnal weapons, but with spiritual ones (**2Co 10:4**). (3) He must keep himself pure. (4) He must not strive but be patient.

Someone has said: "A spare-time Christian is a contradiction in terms; a man's whole life should be one strenuous endeavor to live out his Christianity in every moment and every sphere of his life."

If we desire to be crowned, we will have to strive within the rules. We will have to discipline ourselves. In Timothy's case, the rules are scattered throughout Paul's epistle to him. If we are going to strive for the mastery within the rules, they are what we will have to live with and use properly. May we faithfully abide in His word.

At His service,
Pr. Teddy Santos